

# Art Front

October, 1937 10c

75TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

H. R. 8239

ENGLISH PRATT FREE  
LIBRARY  
OCT 25 1937  
BALTIMORE, MD.

THIRD STACK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 16, 1937

Mr. COFFEE of Washington introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and ordered to be printed

## A BILL

To provide for a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-  
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

### DECLARATION OF POLICY

3  
4 SECTION 1. The Federal art projects have proven con-  
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6 tialities for a great and flourishing culture, which will, if  
7 properly developed, make our country a greater Nation, and  
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9 with democratic equity their cultural aspirations.

10 During the entire history of our Nation and up to the  
11 time of the creation of these projects, the arts were the  
12 jealously guarded possessions of the few and were not made

Complete Text of Federal Arts Bill



# Dear Doctor . . . . .



Each morning I get awful pains  
From reading ads in subway trains.

## WHY SUFFER

needless confusion from the chorus of false and extravagant advertising claims that clang in your ears all day? You, too, can enjoy the benefits of a sane and honest magazine that gives you the truth about what you should or should not take or do to keep your health and native beauty. One hundred doctors recommend HEALTH AND HYGIENE. They write for it, they know. And this is the only prescription we know that's permissible to pass on to your puzzled friends.



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Address .....

City .....

State .....

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## Answer to Washington

In the June-July issue ART FRONT printed an editorial warning its readers of the impending reduction of personnel ordered by the W.P.A. Administration for the Federal Art Project. In the same issue we brought to your attention a list of prominent citizens who had seen fit to publicly affirm their interest and faith in the Projects and to protest the order to cut the function and public service offered by the Federal Arts Projects as a serious retrogressive measure. As the date for the cut (July 15) drew closer bewildered parents began to arrive in the offices of Settlement houses and other institutions demanding to know why their children were to be left without teachers and consequently to the dangers of the city streets. Likewise, sponsors who found the work of the Project indispensable, appeared in the Administration headquarters or wrote letters asking the rescinding of the order and requesting the retention of the individual artists working in their institutions. The local and state administrators for the various Arts Projects, who have intimate and detailed knowledge of the projects and the public demand for art services, sent their protests against reduction of personnel to Washington and reaffirmed their previous reports which had advocated expansion.

The reply of the top administration of the W.P.A. in Washington was very simple. After openly admitting that there was no reasonable basis for cutting the Arts Projects, they proceeded to threaten the protesting workers on the projects with police violence (and carried out this policy on one occasion in Washington); they met the demands of a broad public with complete indifference and, lastly, they threatened to fire the local administrators for having dared to protest an arbitrary order.

So-called liberals such as Aubrey Williams, David Niles and Nels Anderson proceeded to intensify the effect of every reactionary aspect of the provisions of Congress for W.P.A. on the Arts Projects; they made a Roman holiday and a personal exercise of power out of a situation which they should have mediated and directed so as to create a minimum of general social loss. It is not their fault that the Artists Unions have succeeded in reinstating hundreds of those dismissed and have, in conjunction with the sponsors and various groups of citizens, seen to it that most of the vital connections of the Federal Art Project with the people of each community have been maintained.

The July 15 action by the Administration has again underscored the fundamental weaknesses of the present program of government sponsorship of the arts. The first is the undeniable fact that, under an Emergency Relief Program subject to a great deal of political controversy and pressure, it has been impossible to provide any stable employment policy for a longer period than two to three months. No local administrator has any assurance that the next day may not bring with it a order to fire 50 per cent of his personnel regardless of any consideration. This condition makes any long range planning a practical impossibility. It has also been the main factor in creating an atmosphere of complete insecurity among the artists

## Flag Waving vs. Art

"Every day will henceforth be circus day in the New York City Home on Welfare Island. Last week a large mural depicting circus life was placed in the Home's auditorium. The artist was Emanuel Romano." This report appearing in the News of the Week in the New York Sunday Times of Sept. 19, is incomplete. If the Times is interested in printing all the news it would continue: "Upon the formal unveiling of this mural which was acclaimed and presented by the Administration with ceremony and acclaim, the artist Emanuel Romano, without ceremony and acclaim, was presented with a pink slip. Every day will henceforth not be circus day for Emanuel Romano."

Romano and some 70 others on the Art Project in New York alone were dismissed under the provision of the most reactionary piece of legislation yet adopted on the W.P.A. In this act, Congress demands first the unequivocal firing of all aliens. Chinese, Japanese and other Orientals have long been excluded from American citizenship by immigration laws. Therefore, such internationally known American artists as Tamotzu, Ishigaki, Nagai, and Suzuki, never able to obtain citizenship, were fired for being aliens.

The law then provides in somewhat innocuous phrasing that preference in employment shall be given to citizens over people who have declared their intentions to become citizens. The logic of

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## ART FRONT

Official Organ of the Artists' Unions.

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reaction is to attack minority groups within a country one by one. From exclusion of aliens on W.P.A. it becomes easier to exclude non-Aryans, Jews, Negroes or what have you. The method of reaction is to create a precedent and then to quote it.

Strangely, the officials of the art projects do not see in such legislative manoeuvres a serious threat to art. Instead, we find them anxiously examining this piece of legislation with myopic eyes, fearful that they may have to take a progressive stand. There is nothing anywhere in the law concerning those who have applied for citizenship, which makes it mandatory for the administration to fire a single person. Yet under the pretext of abiding by this clause, they have rushed eagerly at the opportunity to dismiss in wholesale fashion!

Time upon time the Union attempted to prove that many of these foreign-born artists were indispensable to the project as they were men of high merit and possessed international reputations. It is a fact that they have given years of their lives in furthering American art and their loss is a distinct loss to the project. Yet the business office of the project has ruled that merit cannot be a consideration in the matter of indispensability to the project. Moreover, they ruled that if any section of the project were to be so severely crippled by the loss of the foreign-born artists, they would even liquidate that section of the project. In other words, if too many mural artists were fired to keep the mural division working effectively, rather than retain these artists they would liquidate the mural division!

Such a callous attitude toward the quality of the projects is sometimes called by an ugly word. Let us make it clear this time—we expect a business administration of the arts project to have a more constructive, progressive point of view.

We will not let the matter rest here. We have arranged for a conference with our Washington officials in order to obtain a more liberal ruling on the problem of the foreign-born artists. A broad conference of trade unions has been held in order to introduce a case in the Federal Courts to interpret the law. Nor will we be content until the problem is finally solved in the next session of Congress by legislation which will wipe out the unwelcome clause in the present Appropriations Bill.

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## PAUL BLOCK

In the town of Azellia, near Belchite in the Spanish province of Aragon, a mound of fresh-turned earth covers the body of Paul Block, sculptor and American soldier of the International Brigade. On September 4th, in the crucial and victorious Republican drive upon Belchite, fascist machine-gun bullets struck Paul as he led his men into the fight. He died two days later, not yet twenty-eight years of age.

Paul Block was one of the ablest leaders of the New York Artists Union. With quiet sureness he guided the Union through its most trying period; he was the main spirit behind organizational adjustments that gave new life to union

on the Project which forces them to do creative work under the most difficult circumstances.

Despite these organic defects the Federal Art Project has long since demonstrated its value to the people of America. This project, originally intended for the relatively limited purpose of relieving economic distress among the artists, has become the basis for the complete development and maturation of art in this country. Under government sponsorship through the W.P.A. we have seen for the first time in our country the growth and stimulation of a broad and progressive movement in art in *all sections of the nation*. The important consideration is that this art movement has not functioned in isolation within a few metropolitan centers but has expanded and grown in conjunction with an audience of millions. The constant contact and interaction between the artists and the general public, which had been provided by the Federal Art Project, is the only basis and guarantee for a more democratic growth and distribution for art in America. Such a program cannot any longer survive and expand under the limitations and constant shocks prescribed by the Federal Work Relief Program. This program must be given a reasonable tenure of life sufficient to allow the operation of a long range plan. To accomplish this the program must have a stable employment policy which will leave both the administration and the artists free to concentrate upon the building of a public art for America which should function on the basis of a cultural service in each community. A limited program confining itself only to the decoration of the walls of public buildings can never meet the public's art needs and their demands. It could never meet the educational requirements particularly necessary in this field of American life.

We have previously brought to the attention of our readers draft legislation providing for the permanency of government sponsorship of the arts. We can now



PAUL BLOCK

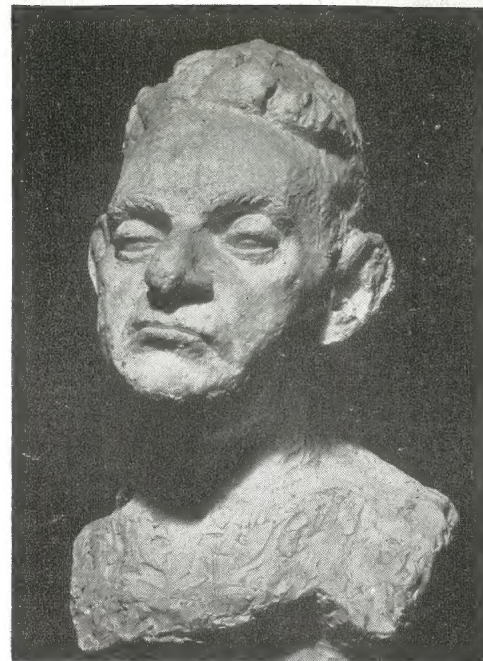
Drawing by  
C. YAMASAKI



announce that such legislation, a Federal Arts Bill, which removes the Arts Projects from the onus of relief, was introduced in the House of Representatives by Mr. Coffee of Washington on August 16, 1937. We bring it to our readers with a pledge of full support. Until its enactment we will devote our energy and space to a complete discussion of the issues crystallized in this legislation. **WE ARE GOING TO FIGHT FOR THE FEDERAL ARTS BILL.**

We invite your support for the Federal Arts Bill as the turning point for the progressive development of culture in America. If our political and social democracy is to have full meaning, no phase of the life of the people can be restricted within the precincts of minority sections of the population. In the past, our cultural life and activity has been spread too thinly and too near the economic top of our society. Out of our democratic convictions has grown the one hundred years of activity necessary to build up a system of free and public education for the United States. A free and public art must now be provided. As a matter which concerns the public good and will establish the arts as the common right and benefit for all Americans, we give you, the Federal Arts Bill.

*National Steering Committee,  
Artists Union of America.*



*Head: PAUL BLOCK  
Courtesy Federal Art Project*

## THE FEDERAL ARTS BILL

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#### DECLARATION OF POLICY

SECTION 1. The Federal art projects have proven conclusively that there exist in the United States the potentialities for a great and flourishing culture, which will, if properly developed, make our country a greater Nation, and render upon our people as a whole the occasion to exercise with democratic equity their cultural aspirations.

During the entire history of our Nation and up to the time of the creation of these projects, the arts were the jealously guarded possessions of the few and were not made available to the majority. Works of art were confined to privately incorporated museums, difficult to visit, and to the completely inaccessible and private collections of wealthy patrons. Great music was played by only a few orchestras in the largest cities at prices prohibitive to the average person. The American theatre was confined to the center of New York City and it is still true that there exists no theatre in most sections of the country. The enjoyment of culture has, in

development. As Union Organizer, he made possible the brilliant success of such diverse Artists Union actions as the "219" protest, news of which swept the country and which engendered new protests everywhere, and the building of thirty floats in a few days for the Workers' Alliance January 9th parade. It was he who conceived the idea of the Public Use of Art Program, a program which has already enabled the New York Union to bring government-sponsored art to a popular audience increased by thousands, and which is the essential groundwork for the wide plan for a democratic American culture now centering around the National Artists Unions Convention and the Federal Arts Bill.

We know that Paul fought for his fellows in Spain with the same zeal and brilliance that characterized his work for his fellows in America. Before Belchite, in the Brunete sector, he had braved the fire of no-man's land to rescue Commander Bart Shilling, lying wounded and helpless in a shell hole. He had fought at Villanueva de la Canada and at Quinto. By the time of Belchite, he had risen to the post of Section Commander in the Abraham Lincoln-George Washington Battalion.

We, who knew Paul Block, can best pay tribute to him by giving our energies to the objectives for which he worked and died. It is by virtue of the efforts of those who share the qualities so richly present in him that success will come in the struggle for democracy in Spain and for a democratic culture in America.

Word has come that four other members of the Artists Union have given their lives in the fight against fascism in Spain:

Sid Graham  
Malcolm Chisholm  
Jim Lang  
Van der Voorst

Graham and Chisholm were recruited into the Artists Union by Paul Block in Spain.



## Weber to Roosevelt

August 11, 1937.

Hon. Franklin Delano Roosevelt  
President of the United States of America  
Executive Mansion  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I realize that it is audacious for a citizen to encroach upon your precious time by diverting your attention even for one moment from other urgent governmental matters, but the plight of my fellow artists, thousands of whom are on the verge of starvation, with no possible chance of securing employment in private industry or of selling their work privately or through art dealers to a rapidly diminishing number of art patrons, compels me to take the liberty of writing to ask you to please advise those at the head of the W.P.A. Art Project not to dismiss either native or alien artists from the Art Project, and to replace the artists who have already been discharged several weeks since.

I make this appeal to you personally, for I well know as do millions of citizens throughout the United States that your interest in the artistic and cultural life of our great nation is as great and as ardent as it is in any other phase of our national life.

Countless thousands of people young and old, in villages, towns, and cosmopolitan centers, who have never enjoyed the privileges of seeing a play, or visiting art exhibitions or of listening to and taking part in art discussions, are now interested in art as a result of the many fruitful activities of the Art Project. It would therefore be a great injustice to those already initiated and to other millions of potential lovers of art, to suddenly dry up the wellsprings of beauty and culture that have been so well tapped in the last two years since the wise inception of the Art Project.

There is every reason to believe that our artistic genius and other spiritual gifts will run parallel to our innovative genius in the field of dynamics and engineering, which has set the pace for the rest of the civilized world. Gradually we will succeed in bringing American Art up to a

the country's past, been predicated too much upon the ability of the individual to pay.

Through the inception of the Federal art projects these conditions have undergone material changes, which have brought into the cultural life of the Nation democratic implications and practices never before known. For the first time millions of our people have begun to receive benefits of cultural enlightenment beyond an elementary education.

The arts have been decentralized through Federal patronage. They have been extended and made available to the entire country. Mural paintings depicting significant and stirring events in American history and present-day life have not only made schools and other public buildings more beautiful but of greater community interest. Millions of people have attended the theatre in their own community where heretofore none had existed. Outdoor theatres have come to the parks, squares, and to the countryside. Orchestras now play in rural communities and in the cities outdoor concerts are held in the parks during the summer. In the playgrounds there are now all manner and types of classes for children, in the arts, crafts, and puppet theatres. These have proved to be a great deterrent to juvenile delinquency. Opportunities for musical education, vocal and instrumental, are widespread and extremely popular. The folk art of America, an integral part of our earlier national life, has again received encouragement. The fine contributions of the Negro people in this field and the continued practice of traditional forms of folk art in various isolated communities have been brought to light and aided materially. Art galleries have been established and maintained in rural sections. These galleries have become centers of community interest thus nurturing an indigenous growth and direction for culture of invaluable import for the nation as a whole.

The above only indicates the beginning of a direction which shall be reaffirmed and extended. It merely points the way of fruition for a democratic culture for the United States.

It is no longer consistent with the purposes of democratic Government to render this program subject to the limitations of the present work-relief program. Under this present program it has been possible to establish reasonable tenure and therefore there is required a constant revision of plans and operations due to the emergency character of these appropriations.

The personnel employed upon the projects cannot work to the best of their creative ability while subject to momentary dismissal and while under the knowledge that at any time, the public which they serve may be deprived of the benefits of the cultural services of the projects as a whole, and the Nation not granted the assurance of permanency of development for its culture. To accomplish this, there is needed a long range and adequate plan.

It is the obligation of the Government to recognize that culture as represented by the arts is a social necessity consistent with democracy and also able to recognize that such culture must be encouraged and developed in the interest of the general welfare.

It is therefore the declared policy of the Government of the United States that Congress appropriate funds out of the United States Treasury for the establishment and support of a permanent Bureau of Fine Arts.

### BUREAU OF FINE ARTS

SEC. 2. (a) There is hereby created an independent bureau under the President of the United States to be known as the "Bureau of Fine Arts" and herein referred to as the "Bureau." The Bureau shall consist of a Commissioner and six members.

(b) The Commissioner shall be appointed by the President of the United States. His salary shall be \$5,000 per annum and he shall be appointed for a term of two years and he may be reappointed.



*Model: BLANCHE GRAMBS*  
*Federal Art Project Aquatint*



(c) The members of the Bureau shall be appointed by the Commissioner. Their compensation shall be as follows: They shall be paid for such time as is necessarily devoted to work on the Bureau at an hourly rate equal to the rate of compensation payable to them if they were employed as artists on the works projects provided in this Act. The tenure of members of the Bureau shall be two years. In selecting the members of the Bureau, the Commissioner shall consult with organizations representing artists employed on the works projects.

#### TRANSFER OF POWERS

SEC. 3. All the functions, powers, and duties exercised by the Works Progress Administration in connection with Works Progress Administration sponsored Federal projects in the fields of art, music, theatre, writers, historical-records survey and in any and all other fields enumerated in section 5, subdivision (a), of this Act shall be assigned and transferred to the Bureau of Fine Arts.

#### REGIONS

SEC. 4. (a) The Bureau shall divide the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Territories and outlying possessions of the United States into appropriate regions for carrying into effect the provisions of this Act.

(b) In each region there shall be created a regional committee consisting of an administrator and four members.

(c) An administrator shall be appointed by the Commissioner, his salary shall be \$4,000 per annum, and he shall be appointed for a term of one year. In selecting a regional administrator, the Commissioner shall consult with the organizations representing the artists employed on the projects within the region.

(d) The members of a regional committee shall be appointed by the regional administrator from a panel of ten names submitted to him by the organizations representing the artists employed on the projects within the region. The compensation of members of a regional committee shall be as follows: They shall be paid for such time as is necessarily devoted to work on a regional committee at an hourly rate equal to the rate of compensation payable to them if they were employed as artists on the projects. The tenure of members of a regional committee shall be one year and they may be reappointed.

#### WORKS PROJECTS AND EMPLOYMENT OF ARTISTS

SEC. 5. (a) The Bureau shall establish a system of works projects which shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) The theatre, its allied arts, and research and teaching therein;
- (2) The dance, its allied arts, and research and teaching therein;
- (3) Music, its allied arts, and research and teaching therein
- (5) Literature, its allied arts, and research and teaching therein;
- (5) The graphic and plastic arts, their allied arts, and research and teaching therein; and
- (6) Architecture and decoration, their allied arts, and research and teaching therein.

#### QUALIFICATIONS

SEC. 6 (a) All artists employed upon Federal projects by the Works Progress Administration on June 30, 1937, shall continue in such employment without interruption under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Fine Arts. The Bureau shall immediately increase the number of artists employed by the Works Progress Administration on June 30, 1937, by a minimum of 20 per centum.

(b) The regional committee shall have sole authority to determine all questions of eligibility and assignment of artists to employment on the projects.

(c) Needy or unemployed artists desirous of employment shall be employed on said projects and the regional committee shall give them preference in employment.

(d) No artist desirous of employment under this Act shall be required to meet any qualifications which shall be set up either by local relief bureaus, Federal agencies for relief, or otherwise for the purpose of granting relief, nor shall stan-

surpassing degree of excellence and distinction, but we cannot hope to accomplish this without adequate artistic nourishment. The nation must be made art-conscious and increasingly aware of the spiritual treasures, and joys inherent in art, music, poetry, the drama, and the dance.

In the two years of its existence the Art Project has proven itself to be an indispensable cultural asset to the nation, with far-reaching and gratifying reward, and to dismantle it now, or in the future would be a great and irretrievable national cultural calamity.

I therefore appeal to you again in behalf of the millions of our countrymen who crave for the enjoyment of art and other cultural advantages, not to curtail that privilege, nor to deny the artists their right and opportunity to help them attain it by creating and teaching through the democratic channels of a permanent Federal Art Project.

Respectfully yours,

MAX WEBER

National Chairman of the  
American Artists Congress

### National Notes

#### CHICAGO

The Chicago Artists Union won a signal victory against reaction in reinstating Peterpaul Ott to his former position as Supervisor of the Creative Sculpture Project. Flouting established labor procedure, Increase Robinson, head of the Federal Art Project for Chicago, had demoted Ott and resisted efforts on the part of the Union to obtain a hearing and a review of any charges against him. As no charges were brought and no reasons stated at the time of his demotion, the Union correctly attributed this action to discrimination against a Union member. This act was the last of a long series in an anti-union policy pursued by this administration. The Chicago Artists Union in winning the issue involved in this case has won a stronger position for itself. It has added concrete support to the general labor movement in its fight to defeat decisively the tenacious remnants of reactionary policies which were discredited and repudiated by the American people in the last election.

In reply to a protest issued by the National Steering Committee Increase Robinson stated in part, "I firmly believe that when you have received complete information in this case you may be glad to retract your accusations."

We invite Increase Robinson to do the same.

The summer show at the Art Institute of Painting of Chicago by Chicagoans included a group of canvases by the following Chicago Artists Union members: Frances Foy, Adrian Troy, Joseph Vavak, Rolf Bemen, Gustave Dahlstrom, Julio de Diego, Jean Crawford Adams and Aaron Bohrod. An interesting reminder of the famous W.P.A. sit-in demonstration of last December at the Merchandise Mart was furnished by Adrian Troy. A panel conceived and actually partially painted at the sit-in was exhibited in the show by this artist.

Frances Strain, associated with the "Ten," is working on the Chicago A.U. Exhibition Com-



mittee. The "Ten," an exhibition group, has been in existence for nine years with only two changes in membership. The group, showing work twice a year, comes near to establishing a record.

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The "world's largest picture gallery" is the title the newspapers have given to the non-juried exhibition at the Navy Pier. The fact that this exhibition is the world's largest does not interest us nearly as much as the realization that this show has the semblance of being a democratic non-juried exhibition of work by living Chicago artists.

Every art form from the "buckeye" and "spot-nocker" to the eclectic abstractionist is represented in this show and all artists who wanted to exhibit have an equal niche at the Navy Pier.

It is a very stimulating experience to walk through the gallery and hear the various comments of the exhibiting artists and spectators, the very heated or pleasant discussion on art, the artists and their creative products. The realization that this freedom of paint expression on the walls and the freedom of verbal expression in the gallery is certainly in healthy contrast to the recent barbaric Nazi manifesto on aesthetic principles. This democratic form must be preserved if we are to enrich and stimulate the cultural life of this city.

The tremendous interest in this show has been demonstrated by the fact that in spite of the generous distribution of free passes to the exhibiting artists, many thousands have paid a 10 cent admission charge to view the exhibit, which indicates to this date that the show will not only be financially self-supporting but will show a profit.

We recall a recent article on the editorial page of the Daily News lauding the show at the pier, stressing the necessity of making this exhibit an annual event. This idea is very commendable but it should go beyond just an annual one month show. A year ago, at the Mid Western Conference of Artists Unions held in Chicago in June, 1936, a resolution was passed, stressing the importance, not only of having various annual exhibitions but to have a permanent municipal Art Gallery open the year round. To quote from paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolutions of commissions on Municipal Galleries:

"1—Be it resolved that all local organizations be contacted and their backing for a municipal gallery be obtained, after which a committee elected from members of all these organizations proceed to contact the commissions necessary to obtaining such an end.

"2—Be it resolved that the administration necessary to such a municipal gallery be directed by a committee also elected from all societies and organizations of artists, and should make up a majority of the control board of such a municipal gallery."

To this end, the Artists Union has pledged itself and will endeavor to accomplish this plan with the welcome support of other organizations.

A large share of the credit for this exhibition must be given to the president of the Artists Union, Robert Jay Wolff, for his untiring efforts a few months ago in contacting Chicago officials and interesting them in this show. President Wolff received permission from Commissioner Hewitt for the use of Navy Pier as an exhibition hall. The permission for the use of this hall was then turned over to the Chicago Jubilee Committee and

standards for obtaining relief set up by their agencies to be used for the qualification of any applicant under this Act.

(e) Employment on projects shall not be denied to any artist by reason of sex, race, color, religion, political opinion, or affiliation or membership in any economic, political, or religious organization.

#### WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

SEC. 7. Wages and working conditions on the projects shall be the same as those established by trade unions for similar work in private industries. In no event shall the weekly wage be less than 20 per centum above the weekly wage presently paid to artists on Federal projects by the Works Progress Administration.

#### CIVIL SERVICE

SEC. 8. (a) The Commissioner, members of the Bureau, regional administrators, members of regional committees, and artists employed on the projects shall not be appointed subject to the civil-service laws.

(b) Both the Commissioner and the regional administrators with the approval of the Commissioner may hire such employees as may be necessary to perform the administrative work under this Act. Such employees shall be appointed subject to the civil-service laws.

#### DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE BUREAU

SEC. 9. (a) The Bureau shall supervise the allotment of funds appropriated pursuant to the provisions of this Act, shall determine the nature of the projects to be financed, and shall make all other determinations of general policy necessary for carrying into effect the provisions of this Act.

(b) The Commissioner shall be responsible for the administration of this Act.

(c) The Commissioner shall act as chairman of the Bureau.

(d) Each member of the Bureau shall act as a national director of one of the projects enumerated in section 5, subdivision (a), of this Act.

#### DUTIES AND POWERS OF REGIONAL COMMITTEES

SEC. 10. (a) The regional administrator shall be responsible for the administration of this Act within his territorial region.

(b) The regional administrator shall act as chairman of the regional committee.

(c) The regional committees shall undertake the education and instruction of the public in the knowledge and appreciation of art. They shall undertake the teaching, training, development, and encouragement of persons as artists.

#### TENURE

SEC. 11. Artists employed on the projects shall be entitled to all the rights and benefits and privileges of Federal employees.

#### VACATIONS

SEC. 12. Every artist employed on a project shall be entitled to sixteen days' annual leave with pay each calendar year, exclusive of Sundays and holidays. This section shall not affect any sick leave to which employees are now or may hereafter be entitled. The part unused in any year shall be accumulated for succeeding years until it totals not exceeding sixty days.

#### SICK LEAVE

SEC. 13. Every artist employed on a project shall be entitled to sick leave with pay. Cumulative sick leave with pay, at the rate of one and one-quarter days per month shall be granted to all such artists, the total accumulation not to exceed ninety days. Regional administrators may advance thirty days' sick leave with pay beyond accrued sick leave in cases of serious disability or ailments and when required by the exigencies of the situation.

#### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

SEC. 14. Artists employed on the projects shall have the right of self-organization; to form, join, or assist labor organizations to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing; and to engage in concerted activities, for the



purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection, free from interference, restraint, or coercion of the Commissioner, the Bureau, the administrators, the regional committees, and any and all other administrative organs and officers.

#### APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 15. (a) All sums presently appropriated for the Works Progress Administration and allocated to the Federal-sponsored works projects in the fields of art are hereby transferred to the Bureau of Fine Arts.

(b) There is hereby appropriated the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act for so long as the Commissioner shall find such sum adequate.

(c) There is hereby authorized to be appropriated for each fiscal year beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 1937, an amount sufficient to provide for all wage payments provided by this Act, and for all expenses of the administration of provisions of this Act, such amount to be determined by the Commissioner on the basis of statistical or other data available to the Commissioner and by him deemed reliable. The Commissioner shall annually submit to the Bureau of the Budget an estimate of the appropriation necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Act.

#### SEPARABILITY

SEC. 16. If any section or provision of this Act be decided by the courts to be unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of the Act as a whole or any part thereof other than the part so decided to be unconstitutional or invalid.

SEC. 17. This Act may be cited as the "Federal Arts Act."

SEC. 18. This Act shall take effect immediately.

the various Chicago art organizations were then invited to send delegates to attend a meeting where definite plans were made for the Navy Pier show. Artist Union members, Robert Jay Wolff, Shepard Vogelgesang, Todros Geller, Frances Strain, Ceil Rosenberg and Edward Millman attended various meetings of this committee.

### No Wisdom

The July-August issue of "Wisdom," a Catholic church organ, devotes a front page editorial to the three specific Catholic virtues—poverty, chastity and obedience—and points out that poverty is the first and cardinal virtue.

There appears on page three of the same issue an editorial commenting on items in the Nazi press. On a headline in large red ink letters reading "Es Stinkt Zum Himmel" it comments as follows: "Under this delicate heading is a piece of purple rhetoric recounting the sins of the 'Roman Brotherhood.' No names, no dates or logic. Just a wild and violent anti-clerical outburst."

From the "Durchbruch" (Smashing Through) for April 8, 1937, the Catholic Front comments as follows, "Here we find two columns of short, but hardly tasty, tidbits headed 'Der Jude Jesus' (Jesus the Jew). Two columns of solid filth against the person of Our Lord, because of His Jewish racial origin."

On page two the following item on Art Front appears in heavy type:

"The Art Front"—From Side View

"There seems to be a natural affinity between a certain soapy type of 'Art' and all Marxists.

"'Art' with a capital A carries a sort of self-erotic appeal to the sophomoric cloakmaker's sons who attend the free state colleges.

"'Front' is another word that these would-be commissars delight in. So they have combined these two shibboleths into a mulligan stew which is called ART FRONT (430 Sixth Avenue, near Union Square, 10 cents a copy—adv.).

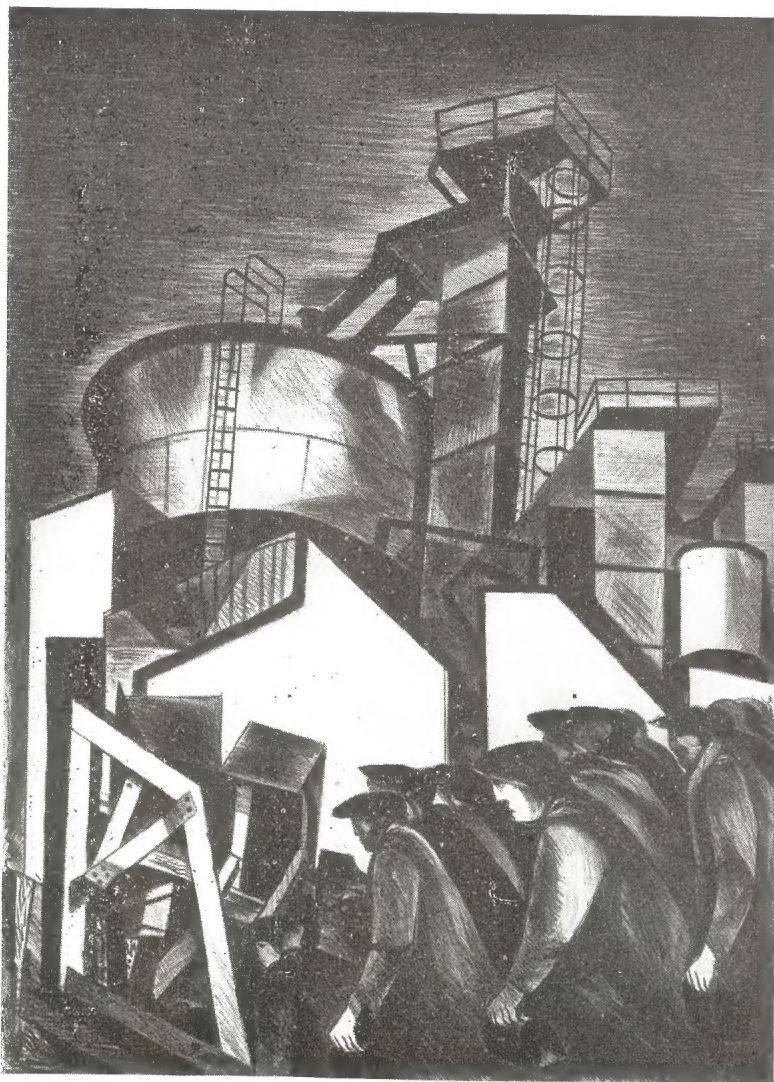
"A gospel and a theology is preached in ART FRONT. You can believe it or not. We do NOT believe it. This gospel consists in the thesis that if you establish a Marxist dictatorship in America, all garbage men and their wives will immediately begin to love 'Beauty'—the kind of Beauty produced by the Art Frontists.

"Presumably if you don't like the kind of beauty propounded by Dictator Goldstein in the grand days when Marx Comes to America—you'll get it in the neck. Just as the Rooshian beauty lovers who clash with Stalin now get it in the neck.

"Ah, Comrade, the Millenium!"

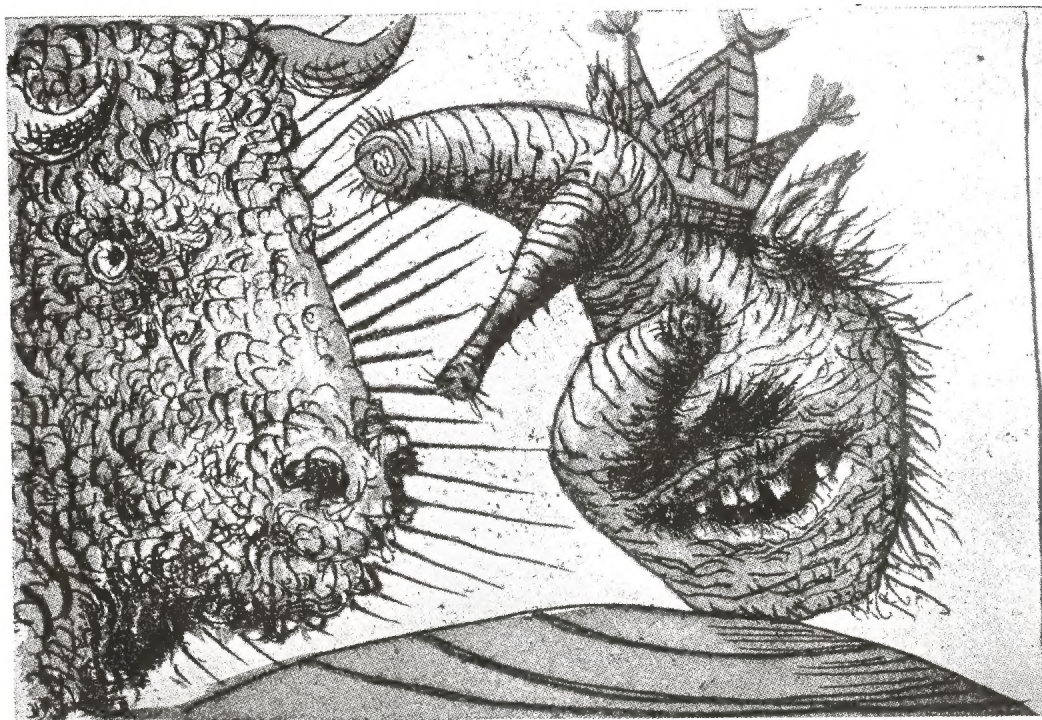
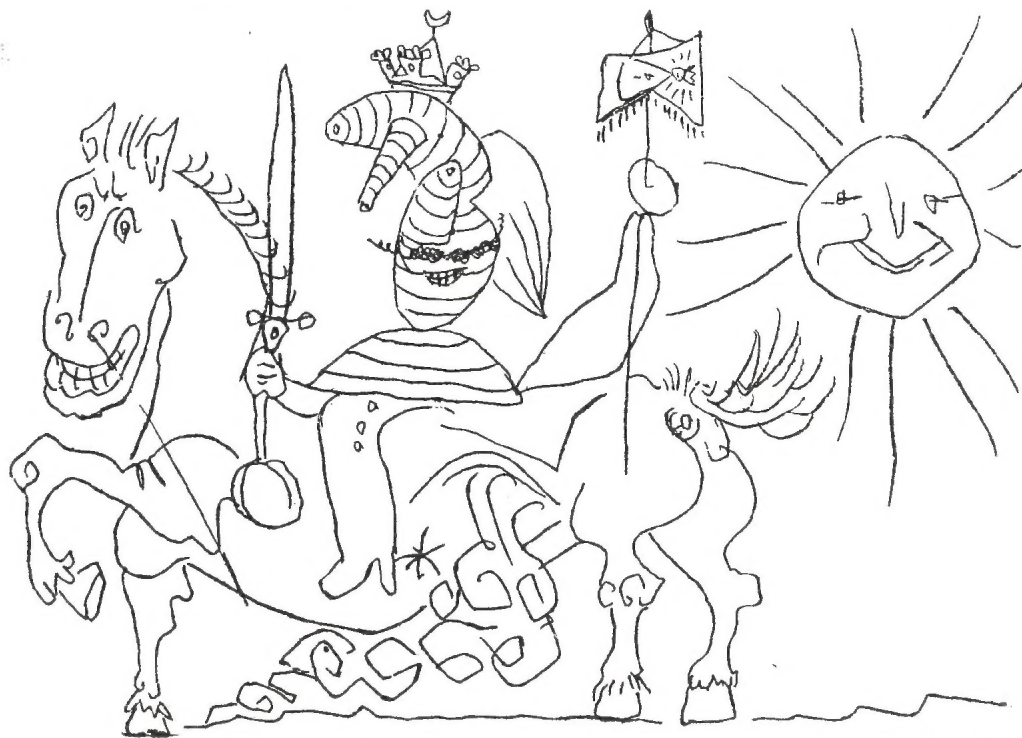
It would be impossible to distinguish between the method employed by this writer, and that used in the excerpts from the Nazi press. Its bitter and undisguised anti-Semitism, the purple rhetoric, the lack of logic and the violent anti-liberal bias is quite apparent. However, it does not stop there but goes the Nazi press one better. The anti-cultural viewpoint preached in the opening paragraphs is accentuated later by the vulgar and chauvinistic reference to all "garbage men and their wives."

For these reasons we can only say of this nasty piece of invective—"Es Stinkt Zum Himmel."



Another Day  
JOSEPH VOGEL  
Federal Art  
Project Lithograph





## PICASSO

*"Dream and  
Falsehood of Franco"*

Eighteen engravings by Picasso, in three different states, were collected in book form and issued in Paris this summer. All the proceeds go to the Spanish government.

Copies of the volume may be purchased through the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy.



# Picasso and Spain

"The Spanish struggle is the fight of reaction against the people, against freedom. My whole life as an artist has been nothing more than a continuous struggle against reaction and the death of art. How could anybody think for a moment that I could be in agreement with Reaction and Death, against the people, against freedom? When the rebellion began, the legally elected and democratic Republican Government of Spain appointed me director of the Prado Museum, a post which I immediately accepted. In the panel on which I am working and which I shall call "Guernica" and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death.

"The ridiculous story which the Fascist propagandists have circulated throughout the world has been exposed completely many times by the great number of artists and intellectuals who have visited Spain lately. All have agreed on the great respect which the Spanish people in arms has displayed for its immense artistic treasures and the zeal which it has exhibited in saving the great store of pictures, religious paintings and tapestries from Fascist incendiary bombs. Everyone is acquainted with the barbarous bombardments of the Prado Museum by rebel airplanes and everyone also knows how the militiamen succeeded in saving the art treasures at the risk of their lives. There are no doubts possible here. On the one hand, the rebels throw incendiary bombs on museums. On the other, the people place in security the objectives of these bombs, the works of art. In Salamanca, Milan Astray cries out, 'Death to Intelligence.' In Granada, Garcia Lorca is assassinated.

"In the whole world, the purest representatives of universal culture join with the Spanish people. In Valencia I investigated the state of pictures saved from the Prado and the world should know that the Spanish people have saved Spanish art. Many of the best works will shortly come to Paris and the whole world will see who saves culture and who destroys it.

"As to the future of Spanish art, this much I may say to my friends in America. The contribution of the people's struggle will be enormous. No one can deny the vitality and the youth which the struggle will bring to Spanish art. Something new and strong which the consciousness of this magnificent epic will sow in the soul of Spanish artists will undoubtedly appear in their works. This contribution of the purest human values to a renascent art will be one of the greatest conquests of the Spanish people."

## American Artists and Spain

Commenting on this message, Paul Manship, leading American sculptor, had the following to say: "The preservation of the masterpieces of the Prado Museum in Madrid from the aggression of Fascist barbarism has been the matter of course job of Spanish artists and lovers of freedom in their defense of liberty and culture. Bravo for Pablo Picasso's aid to the Spanish People!"

Rockwell Kent, painter, author, illustrator, lecturer, and adventurer, said: "The fact that Picasso has had to make a public statement that he is for democracy, for freedom, and for the Loyalist cause in Spain, implies that the general public does not realize that artists have hearts and brains. It is a fact that people are divided in their sympathies, whole classes being for Fascism, oppression, war and the wholesale butchery of wom-

en and children. Among these there is probably in the whole world not one artist, certainly not one worthy of the name."

Stuart Davis, prominent American abstract painter and Executive Secretary of the American Artists' Congress, said, "Picasso has been the world leader in the technological advance of modern painting for twenty-five years. From his statement we can see that in his great individual victory as an artist of genius he has not forgotten the roots from which his courage and vision sprang. Picasso's public stand for freedom and democracy against Fascism and war should deal the death blow to the unsound argument, so often advanced, that the artist has no concern with public affairs."

Henry L. McFee, painter, of Woodstock, N. Y., said, "Artists in America and

throughout the world must be overjoyed with the message from Picasso."

Paul Burlin, whose work was recently purchased by the Whitney Museum of American Art, said, "Any intelligent artist instinctively joins a people in its struggle for freedom against the octopus of death and reaction. It well behooves all artists in America to take heed of Mr. Picasso's letter by vehemently opposing the same impasse already threatening them at home."

Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Japanese artist, resident in America for 25 years, said of Picasso's message, "If art and the cultural heritage of the world is to be preserved the artist must align himself against the forces of destruction."

Arnold Blanch, painter and lithographer, said, "We artists of America who have taken a stand against Fascism will be encouraged and stimulated by Picasso's sincere and unequivocal statement. At a time like this how could anyone be without opinion. There is no doubt that the future of world culture is at stake. There can be no uncertainty—you are on one side or the other."

The following artists, prize winners and members of the jury of the Carnegie International Exhibition at Pittsburgh, were quoted as follows: Judson Smith, of Woodstock, N. Y., "The Picasso letter brings to the artists' attention the necessity for professional solidarity, since all of us agree with him in the stand that he has taken." Henry Mattson, also of Woodstock, said, "We can sympathize with Picasso in relation to the destruction of his country's art, which is a universal inheritance. Let us pray that America may be spared such a destruction if that situation should ever develop here."

Max Weber, painter, poet, teacher; pioneer of abstract painting in the United States; Chairman of the American Artists' Congress, said, "Picasso's statement is a personal and urgent call to the artists of the world to see and to know the truth. In this call I hear the voice of one of the most gifted Spanish artists of modern times, in distress over the calamity that has befallen his people, his country, its culture. I hear his voice in unison with the undying voices of Greco, of Zurbaran, of Goya, of Cervantes, calling to the people of the democratic countries of the world, warning them of another Sarajevo, of darkness, of death."

*(Editors Note: We are indebted to the American Artists Congress for the Statement by Picasso and the comment thereon.)*





*Composition: ELIZABETH MANGOR*  
*Courtesy Federal Art Project*

# Modern Art and Modern Society

By A. L. Lloyd

According to Marx, the method of material production conditions, and even determines, the development of social, political and intellectual life in general. Yury Plekhanov, that intelligent, highly cultured and peppery gentleman, in studying the relation of the economic bases to the ideological superstructure of society, evolved the following formula:

1. *State of the productive forces.*
2. *Economic relations* conditioned by these forces.
3. *Social-political regime* built up on the given economic basis.
4. *Psychology of the social being* determined partly by directly economic influences, and partly by the social-political regime.
5. The various *ideologies* reflecting this psychology.

Plekhanov's brilliant tabulation has, however, misled many earnest sectarian Marxists who have imagined they need only be Marxists to be able effectively to criticize any damn thing, whether it be psychoanalysis, physics, art, or what you will. They ignore the elementary fact that to be able to pass a valuable opinion on della Francesca or Freud, they must know a lot about art or psychoanalysis, as well as Marxism, otherwise the advantage which their materialist standpoint gives them is immediately discounted.

## Paris Letter

As yet it is impossible to essay even an approximate estimate as to how many of the artistic renderings now to be seen at the Paris Exposition will find permanent residence in the Exposition halls themselves, how many thanks to official managerial approval will be shifted to artistic hostels (Louvre, Jeu de Paume, Orangerie, Petit Palais, etc.), how many will wend their way to the private galleries of art dealers or the studios and salons of artists. Twenty thousand would be an estimate to be adjudged as not too rashly maximal or too begrudgingly minimal. Only a paltry fraction of this count which represents the accretion and accumulation of diverse groups and their centuries old artistic yield, which ranges from the art of Chinese antiquity to modern abstractionism, which encompasses the most disparate styles, forms and media and which moves from end to end of a critic's value scale, of this all inclusive count an insignificant part is to be accredited to living Parisian artists.

The novice, artistic alien or savage examining this exhibition of paintings and sculpture would easily be led to infer that art is a centrifugal force in our life, that it is our commanding Jehova or less reverentially our idolatrous golden calf. On the other hand the initiated and discerning will observe, and correctly so, that it is the converse of this proposition which is true; that art in our society is not at all the motive power we should like it to be, that it is little more than a curtain drop, now disguising, now shielding the actual brutality and barbarity of our social structure.

Let us give ear, despite the alluring piping of artistic savants, piping as enticingly calculated and executed as that of the rat catchers of legendary fame, to the tonic cynicism of the sceptic. His irony may well bar blundering judgements induced by blind enthusiasm and may possibly bring us closer to evaluations that are valid when tried by actuality.

Art is a medium, utilizable—for whom and

The fact is, if you attempt to give a *direct* economic explanation of the ideological tendencies of an epoch, you are asking for trouble. It is true that the economic factor actually predominates, but its activity is so overlaid by other subsidiary factors that one is faced, at the outset of one's study, with a series of apparently irreconcilable discrepancies between the artistic and the sociological expression, between the forms of art and the state of society, which a knowledge of the economic lif of the times does not immediately explain, and which incompetent Marxists occasionally gloss over by sheer dishonesty, to the regrettable discredit of the historical-materialist method.

In examining the sociological situation of modern art, let us briefly consider the state of affairs during the nineteenth century, the back-cloth of the contemporary ideological position:

On the one hand, were the natural sciences, resting on apparently solid bases, and subject to a large extent to the laws of the division of labour; on the other hand, was the embryonic state of a moral and philosophical science which to this day cannot strictly distinguish between a subjective emotion and a scientific fact. On the one hand was a material social production undergoing startling development precisely thanks to the natural sciences; on the other, a speculative artistic production, relying more and more on individual activity, and representing to a growing extent a departure from contemporary realities.

So the abyss between economic production and intellectual production became so wide that economics followed its own laws in an almost autonomous way, escaping as far as possible from the repercussions of the ideologies; while art on the other hand, also developed autonomously the problems of its own history and theory. Growing more and more detached from material conditions, art began to assume forms of an abstract spirituality very different from the old Christian-mythological expression or the frilly-gallant pictures of aristocratic preoccupation which had succeeded it.

In short, art was giving direct expression to the *psychology* of the dominant class rather than to its economics (though we have seen that this psychology is largely determined by the economic factor). The modes of material production and consumption determine the modes of spiritual production. To feudalism corresponds the workshop, and the generally accessible character of mediaeval art. To capitalism corresponds the individual creation in private studios of works sold in an open



market, where speculative interests and a yen for sensation predominate. The commerce and the private property of paintings, the extraordinary sentimental superstition with which the business man regards the artist (think of the way in which the average advertising executive speaks of a star copywriter), all this demonstrates the confused connection between idealism and business. It is largely, I think, this atmosphere of "You have no money? Then the flowers are not for *you* to pick!" which has been responsible for turning modern art into the channels it has since pursued, into these strange and rarified grottos, where exquisite little mollusc-artists can shrink and expand in privacy (or relative privacy; they love you to watch them, but through a glass). The quality of individual sensibility comes to be of paramount importance, and there is a superstitious exaggeration of the esthetic efficacy of taste and style. So art is forced away from the affairs of man to float—not in the air, that would be too romantic, too emotive, too vieux jeux also, but in some exquisite vacuum.

It seems as if most of the best and most characteristic works of specifically modern art are produced under circumstances in which the artist's muse has said to him: "For God's sake express nothing at all but your taste, your sensibility, and if you find you can't make a nice picture out of that, and you really *must* express something else, then watch your step, remember your manners, and whatever it is, don't say it, just allude to it as obliquely as possible." Where, a hundred years ago, the artist had painted big lines with a figleaf on the brain, he now paints little lines with a finger on his lip.

This attitude is pursued to such lengths that some little while ago one of England's best abstract artists (he makes his pictures, he doesn't paint them), in speaking of two painters who were, one had thought, as abstract as painters could be, said: "You know, Mondrian has something which Héliou hasn't yet got. More depth, more resolution. For there are times when Héliou uses a blue"—and he lowered his shocked voice—"a blue that distinctly reminds one of the sky!" So that this tiny and quite accidental emotive allusion is considered a millstone round the neck of the artist's expression.

It must be remembered, however, that within their rather drastic taste-and-sensibility limits, there exist today painters as good as painters ever were—indeed, as John Strachey has remarked of literature, the very tendencies of modern art have produced a degree of analytical intelligence and sensitiveness which is hardly paralleled in other epochs. But by virtue of its reliance on individual sensibility, and its detachment from material conditions, the work of the modern artist becomes increasingly eclectic, it is temperamentally accessible to a rapidly narrowing stratum of society.

I realize that in making this statement I am treading on dangerous ground, for it is extremely doubtful to what extent people ever *understood* the art of their time, in the bourgeois sense of "understanding," which generally means assessing the abstract merits of the work of art. But to say the Negro doesn't understand Gabun sculpture because he doesn't twitter in a Gaumont-British accent about its marvellous geometrical restraint, to say the churchgoers of Borgo San Sepolcro in the fifteenth century didn't understand della Francesca's "Resurrection" because they may have taken for granted the unparalleled mastery of its composition, is to beg a very serious question, and it brings us to an important point in our examination of modern art. Without its tremendous artistry, neither the Gabun sculpture nor the della Francesca picture could have meant so *much* to the beholder. But the point for the Negro and the mediaeval Christian lay in the effective figuration of some mythological terror or triumph. The esthetics were only incidental. *How* the picture was, was incidental to *what* it was. Today, this axiom is reversed. The bourgeois artist finds no theme he can acknowledge as valid.\* In consequence, *how* he expresses matters much more than *what* he expresses.

This curious circumstance is largely due to the historic decay of the myth, and it

\* Witness the failure of Epstein, for example. At one time, he looked as good as any sculptor in Europe. But he is unable to find an effective mythological theme, and unable to work without one.

against whom? Are there murmurings of the sacred obligation of art to serve itself, abide by its own dicta, be answerable to itself alone? Suffice it to say that even the most stubborn purists must see the resemblance of such a prescription to the questionable attempt of the wonder-doctor to extract a diseased nasal polyp, but who much more nimbly empties his patient's money bag. So it is that art today, described with due harshness as a dabbler's craft preoccupied with bagatelles, reveals the poverty of our society much more than it dignifies or adorns it. A disintegrating policy needs art as reinforcement against the onslaught of social demands—demands which bid fair to reduce it to a crumbling edifice. Art is now the white banner of armistice in the class struggle—and it is precisely that which is the sin of each of the paintings and sculptures on display. A sin a conscientious person may regard as venial.

Despite so lustrous a halo, the dark gray rust is apparent. Capitalist reaction is determined to down its class enemy, the proletariat, to throttle its moves in whatever direction, in whatever manner.

The melodrama of an exhortation addressed to those who are our artistic progenitors is lessened by the dire plight of the proletariat. To those who are feeding on the harvest garnered from capitalist art, it is not amiss to say—"remember, the French proletariat is not gourmandizing, in like fashion—it can not—it may not."

It is just a fortuitous occurrence that the fate of China, Austria, Spain is unwittingly revealed by the Exhibition pieces. Do we not see therein China as the sacrificial victim of Japanese imperialism, Austria strangled by a double-headed fascism, Spain rent by Civil War against her spurious "Nationalists" and in this embryo World War against all fascism?

Is this not that very cultural propaganda which we savored during the World War—the very subtle, adept, psychological manipulation of events and facts, public opinion, prescribed and fulfilled? It is wilful blindness that would prevent one from seeing the intimate relationship between the large Italian display and Italy's Ethiopian manoeuvres; undeniably politics, domestic and international, recognizes no realm as untouchable, not even that of art.

And yet are the displays no more than beggars' licenses granted by democratic France? It would seem as though all the artists stemming from all the trouble spots of the earth have sought out Paris as a haven and a refuge—Paris, the time-honored home of art and incidentally the city which will in all probability be the first target of Hitlerite bombs. A gesture of rare honor, a poignant farewell to the art of Paris, to the culture of Europe. Far wanderers offer a tear to this Athens of the Occident, for all too soon shall art be made nameless by the war plans of dictators.

Art, however, has long given itself up—artists have accepted casually the fact that capitalism cannot nourish a healthy art. Take as proof the Exhibition itself—state ordered.

Working under limitations of time, space, etc., it was almost inevitable that the end result be a somewhat sorry sight, calling forth even a fleeting blush from the artists responsible. Dissent, protest against such working conditions came from a stray artist accidentally endowed with courage.



Look well, scrutinize carefully the actual structure of our artistic milieu—is it very much more than a commodity exchange where values fluctuate causelessly? Reckon the fabulous prices paid for works of “esteem and renown,” justify the mass production of artistic wares, with every artist acting as his own pet ape, condone the purchase of culture that is never more than an over-layer, or of the artist who is the egoistic unprincipled lackey. To sum up all the grievances against art and its producers would be too long a list—it is enough to suggest that art now sorely lacks substance, and will continue to do so until it recognizes its social function.

These suggest some of the social, political and economic functions which art must perform—and when the artist ignores his social obligations and produces his opium, denying his allegiance to the world of truth, then can he no longer invest himself with importance and needs must laugh at himself, a bit ruefully.

Certainly insight into the causes for such social waste and distortion is needed so that we can muster the strength to struggle now and retain our faith in the future of the working class. While capitalist desserts are sweet to the taste we must not expect the artist to respond to the proletarian cause.

Further research of a sociological nature would take us too far afield, though wise it be to understand why the artist is the outsider, the bohemian, the ivory tower devotee. Such an understanding is the key to the further understanding of his potentialities and possibilities.

All of which is intended as an indicant of the spirit and substance of the Exhibition—that it is not the living art of a growing society but the macabre dance of a skeleton, who is cavorting until dawn. And yet it were a mistake to suppose that art as such is dead—one must qualify, and say, bourgeois art is bloodless. Art is at a standstill, just as our political economy finds itself in a crisis. The resolution of the one problem spells the regeneration of the other. The proletariat, grown powerful, will forge for art a weapon to aid in its own fruition and with its accession to sovereignty, it will provide the soil that art now needs. No more will the denuded spectre of an empty art invade the realm where only that which is artistically desirable and socially beneficent will hold sway.

GASTON VEBER

(Translated by Sonya Steinman.)

## Design Laboratory

On Monday, September 27, the Design Laboratory at 116 E. 16th Street, New York City, began its first term as the industrial design department of the Federation of Architects technical school. With the opening of this school and the coming to America of Walter Gropius and Lazlo Moholy-Nagy to direct similar courses of instruction at Harvard University and at the New Bauhaus in Chicago, this country will see a most significant development of education in industrial art. More important yet for artists is the attempt these men and the teachers of the Design Laboratory will make to break down the arbitrary distinction between the fine and industrial arts which has held up so much experimentation in both these fields

is this decay which has so materially contributed towards widening the gap between economic and spiritual production.\* Mythology had always hitherto existed as the intermediary between the economic basis and the ideological superstructure of society. As Marx has pointed out, the role of the myth is to express the forces of nature in the imagination, ideally to conquer and dominate them, and the myth decays as the domination becomes effective.

Greek art is determined by Greek mythology, i.e., by natural conditions and the form of society being both transformed, in an unconsciously artistic fashion, by the imagination of the people. Egyptian mythology, the product of a different social order confronted with different natural problems, could never have formed the basis of Greek art. Only an autochthonous mythology, a mythology coming from the same soil, the same people, the same cultural superstructure of the same economic order can be the effective intermediary between art and material production, despite the bourgeois superstition that any mythology, even one personally transformed into a kind of private religion, can form such a link.

So we have the sad spectacle of many modern artists seeking to erect a barrier out of whatever this fake personal religion may contain of idealism, metaphysics and symbolism, in order to dissimulate what the process of creation has failed to achieve. And if one says “I don’t think so much of *that* for a picture,” the immediate reply is “Ah, but look how *original* it is, how daringly individual!”

The idealized realism of mediaeval art had addressed itself to the entire Christian community, not by virtue of its terrestrial materialism, but in its theological idealism. It raised subjective sensibility beyond the objective and communal to the metaphysical state of the myth. The Renaissance brought a change of direction towards the human and terrestrial, by virtue of one of those curious revivals of classical antiquity which seem consistently to have occurred at the critical moments of bourgeois growth and decline. And with this change in direction, the division into an aristocracy of genius and a plebeianism of the mass became effective, and persists in our own time in its most exaggerated form. The role of the intermediary became more and more concerned with the abstract consciousness of the individual, and less and less with the corporative sensibility of the masses. The rift between naturalism and idealism rapidly widened.

In the nineteenth century, with the growing triumphs of the material sciences, all forms of the historical development of mythological and religious art came to an end. The intermediary role of mythological art could now only take the form of a reactionary revival, for all the sources of mythology in the Western World had dried up. Christian mythology had contained elements favourable to artistic production, because the artist was forced (religious concepts being inaccessible to the senses) to go the utmost limits of artistic expression to render accessible to the senses of the masses that which was spiritual to the highest degree. And to see that artistic production operating as an intermediary, one has only to consider the part played by El Greco and Thomas Luis Victoria in the Counter-Reformation. Nowadays, a painter of Greco’s standard, a musician of the calibre of Victoria could have but little effect in reconciling the masses to a contemporary material situation.

The growth of commercial power and the corresponding decline of the Christian myth at first gave rise, despite the curious lapses into Hellenism which I have remarked, to an art-expression having a more or less direct bearing on the social life of the dominant class, so that the bulk of eighteenth century painting, for example, is the direct and obvious expression of an aristocratic people who never did a day’s work in their lives, living in economic circumstances in which they had no need to bother about the struggle for existence, and which enabled them to pre-occupy themselves with witty and delicate exercise of lasciviousness so gracefully depicted in their paintings and engravings.

As we know, this expression was soon to alter its appearance, for before the rising power of the bourgeoisie, aristocratic painting fled from sociability into a feeble attempt at a classical mythological expression, an expression which was taken over

\* For the elaboration of this, and other points in this essay, the reader is referred to Max Raphael’s brilliant book “Proudhon—Marx—Picasso.”





*Fire Trap:*  
CHUZO TAMOTZU

Courtesy  
A.C.A. Gallery

from David and his museum friends by vigorous bourgeois painters like Delacroix, and invested with all the vitality and bombast of the rising class, and in seventy years or so the long-nosed gallantry of feudal aristocracy had completely given way to Renoir's bright vulgarity. Instead of painting shepherdesses like pompadours, the process was now virtually reversed, and princesses were painted looking like the cheerfully vulgar daughters of a suburban grocer. But even more significant than Renoir's sweet-haunched little bourgeois curving their mouths so genially beneath their umbrellas, were Seurat's bowler-hatted men, so stereotyped, so businesslike, and as formal as a limited company. Already, the fate of this directly social and obviously bourgeois expression was in the balance.

An era of transformation was taking place which, like all critical periods, had quite a different effect from the preceding period of calm and relative constancy. The transition into capitalist monopoly produced at the same time a moment of decline and a moment of growth—a moment of tension.

The lack of equilibrium between a too great material expansion and an inadequate form of organization led to the organic formation of capitalist monopoly, in which production and distribution are dominated by finance capital in the form of trusts and cartels, national and international. This system tends drastically towards the formal rationalization of the methods of labor, the organization of enterprises, the regulating of the relations between bank capital and industrial capital, etc.

This feudal and dictatorial formalism is itself undermined by the contradiction between the private form of capitalist appropriation and the social form of monopolist organization, a contradiction which is further accentuated by the fact that society is divided into antagonistic classes, into economically autonomous bodies, national ideologies, etc.

With the growing tendency towards the industrial and commercial regimentation of the masses, we find a corresponding dehumanisation in the pictorial arts, a de-

heretofore. It is also of the greatest import that this school should be sponsored by the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians, a C.I.O. affiliate. This is one of the first practical steps toward the creation of a Labor University, based on the needs and interests of the American working class.

The Laboratory has issued an interesting catalogue with a statement of principles which we print here:

The Design Laboratory was founded in September, 1935, through the initiative of Mrs. Florence M. Pollak, then Director of Art Teaching of the Federal Art Project in New York. The Laboratory was organized to fill the need for a school in America which could offer complete instruction in the various categories of Industrial Design. Classes were started in January, 1936, with a faculty under the direction of Gilbert Rohde. Free instruction was provided in Industrial Design, Photography, and the Fine Arts. From the very beginning, school policy and pedagogical methods were formulated by the Faculty.

Until the organization of the Design Laboratory, training for practise in the fields of Industrial Design had been largely empirical, each person engaging in this work having secured his education in whatever fashion his inexperience dictated. The aim of the Design Laboratory is to train people for this field in an orderly manner, with a view to orientating a group of men and women capable of coordinating the separate factors of technological possibilities, sociological needs, and commercial enterprise. In June, 1937, due to extensive curtailments, the WPA abandoned the Design Laboratory. The Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists, and Technicians immediately assumed sponsorship of the school, making it part of its Federation Technical School.

During its existence, the Design Laboratory has given much time for experimentation, to determine the best methods of giving instruction in Industrial Design. In developing the pedagogy, much has been borrowed from the late Bauhaus of Dessau, Germany and more has been conceived by the members of the Faculty as a result of their practical experience in the field.

The faculty consists of Murray Boven, shop; Edwin Berry Burgum, social science; Peter Copeland, design; Ernest L. Dimitry, shop; S. Liam Dunne, display design; William Friedman, product design; Anna W. Franke, textile design; Samuel Garshelis, industrial science; Peter Gonzales, textile design; Allan Gould, product design; Alfons Goldschmidt, social science; William H. Hoffman, industrial science; Edmond Lee Kanwit, social science; Yankel Kufeld, design synthesis; Jacques F. Levy, product design; I. Rice Pereira, design synthesis; William Priestly, interior design; Hilde Reiss, product design; Joseph J. Roberto, product design; Irving Spellins, display design; Lila Ulrich, design synthesis; Saul Yalkert, shop; Vladimir Yoffie, design synthesis.

The advisory board includes Frederick L. Ackerman, Alfred Auerbach, George Barsky, Edwin Berry Burgum, Henry Churchill, Robert Dunn, Alfons Goldschmidt, Percival Goodman, Robert Josephy, Frederick Kiesler, Josiah P. Marvel, Albert Mayer, Audrey McMahon, James Mendenhall, Dewey Palmer, Frances M. Pollak, Alexander R. Stavenitz, Clarence S. Stein, Vertner W. Tandy, Julian Whittlesey.



## Of All Things

### MYSTERY?

According to a U. P. report, New Orleans Catholics have raised \$850,000 with which to buy a collector's dream of rare paintings allegedly stolen by Communist soldiers from Spanish churches.

The collection comprising 67 paintings "worth many millions," is now in the hands of Mexican "Reds," according to the agent who offered it to a group of wealthy Catholics in New Orleans. When the funds were raised the collection was to be installed in the new \$1,000,000 Notre Dame Seminary. The idea was to make New Orleans the "Art Center of America."

Joseph Francis Rummel, Archbishop of New Orleans, has certain misgivings, however, about accepting the gift for the church. There is the delicate matter of the church's accepting stolen property. The good Archbishop is now consulting his conscience. It is already a matter of months and as yet apparently he has found no solution for the problem.

In the meantime a high church official admitted to the U.P. that there were such pictures as reported, in Mexico. This church official admitted qualms on the point of the church's accepting stolen property even as a gift. As the collection is said to contain, among others, two paintings by El Greco, several Murillos, a Velasquez and two Rubens, it would appear to be a little too hot for the church to handle.

The "Art Digest" comments as follows:

"According to the unnamed agent, the pictures are ready to be shipped from Mexico and if they are not accepted by the Archbishop will be offered for public sale in New Orleans. Further news of the phantom collection is eagerly awaited, if and when it appears. One wonders For American friends of the Loyalists have proudly publicized the good care which the



Ward Heelers: AUGUSTUS PECK

humanisation already foreshadowed in the ornamentally formal treatment of the human being in Seurat, perhaps the most advanced of nineteenth century painters, whose figures are as stereotyped as the dolls in a Noah's Ark.

It is not just by chance that we find this growing tendency towards dehumanisation, first in Matisse, then later in Picasso and Braque, and most explicitly in Léger and Baumeister. With Miró, the human figure has gone beyond being a machine; it becomes a cipher-like symbol, almost indistinguishable, sometimes, from Kandinsky's purely abstract arabesques.

The limits of modern bourgeois art are shown most clearly in the extent to which it takes refuge in caricature. This is to be remarked no less in the impressionism of Degas than in the expressionism of Nolde, the cubism of Picasso, the mechanical analogies of Léger, and the quasi-surrealist phantasies of Miró on the one hand and Arp on the other. Daumier was the first great artist really to develop the bourgeois style of caricature in painting, and up to our own time, bourgeois art has revolved round him as around a hub.

With the development of monopoly control, the human being becomes more and more eliminated from modern social life, he becomes merchandise. This process of decomposition has reached such a pitch that the modern artist is able to surpass Daumier by replacing the organic (as much from the psychic viewpoint as the physical) by analogies with mechanism, or even by some system of entirely abstract relations. It will be understood, of course, that this type of vision is extended beyond the figuration of the human being to the representation of emotive objects, whether they are landscapes, bowls of fruit and brandy-bottles, or those millions of guitars which Picasso's nostalgic sentiment for Andalusia had placed, for a while, in the middle of every still-life painter's canvases.

Without the introduction of caricature which has so decomposed European tradition, cubism, perhaps the most powerful, most characteristic art development of the century, could never have come into being.

Cubism, which in the first instance developed almost directly from a synthesis of Negro art which ethnographers had made familiar early in the century, and a deformation of certain principles of Cézanne, was the most decisive step away from the rational and sensorial towards the irrational and metaphysical in *content* (though it created at the same time a rationalization of *form* which was quite new to European art). But the great cubists, Picasso, Braque and Gris, were made to realize the limits to the path which they were following; this abstract idealism building patterns out of metaphysical interpretation of bodies in space could not recover concrete and material reality. They tried to resolve by a kind of quadrature of the circle the artist's eternal problem of a reconciliation between idealism and materialism. They tried to stiffen their pictures by employing, side by side with the most abstract forms, certain non-artistic materials, pieces of cut-out paper, labels, fragments of commercial lettering, etc., stuck on to the canvas.

This paradoxical juxtaposition of the ideal and the material, so unrelated in content (however much the forms may have harmonized) created a tension in the picture, a kind of shock which heightened the esthetic effect, and this, no doubt, was the artists' only conscious intention.

But this esthetic effect does not dissemble the internal contradiction. Faced with the most decisive problem in the whole domain of art, the resolution of idealism and materialism, the paradoxical nature of the pictures of this period, abstractly beautiful as they often were, shows that an approach which interprets idealism so abstractly, and materialism so much by the letter, does not constitute any sort of solution, but is rather a confirmation of the impotence of the bourgeois painter, living in a period of unparalleled social contradiction, to find a solution to the problem.

The exaggeration of these two poles, deprived of all element of dialectics in their treatment, for with the gradual decline of cubism proper, modern art became concerned with two apparently antithetical means of expression, the classical-antique and the abstract. It is this brief period which shows most clearly the gap between the static and dynamic tendencies of bourgeois art.



Alongside the handsomely coloured and highly stylised still-lives called "Nature morte à la Bouteille," "Nature morte au Compotier," "Nature morte à la Guitare," there began to appear pictures of a straight-nosed stony people in togas, reclining hugely in classical attitudes upon a seashore, or gazing solemnly at ponderous babies in their laps. There were also gladiators, and young Hellenes leading crinkly-tailed horses through the ruins of Corinthian architecture. The last, most bastardised and feeble renaissance of classical antiquity had begun.

For the past five hundred years, artists have made use of Greek mythology, or more precisely, the content of Greek art, each time the whole culture has entered a period of crisis. The crises are caused, of course, by some enlargement of the economic and social facts, which discomposes the vital frame of the existing ideologies. The absorption of hitherto unknown facts becomes necessary; it is necessary to struggle against certain material elements not yet mastered. Consequently, the tendency is to orientate towards the terrestrial and away from the celestial; an ideology of realistic, quasi-rationalistic character is established. The successive renaissances of classical activity have found their expression in an accentuation, an exaggeration even, of a corporeal realistic style.

Christian mythology, by its very nature, excluding sensuality and surpassing perceptibility, tended to leave the artist to himself at the moment when his class was faced with hitherto unknown material circumstances, only to be overcome by a fierce struggle. That is the big drawback to metaphysical art, the struggle against facts tends to become the flight from reality.

Now, the French and German classicism which arose at the final overthrow of feudalism about 1800 had displayed a much more superficial understanding of antique art than had the classicism of the Italian Renaissance at the turn of the XV and XVI centuries. And the classicism of the bourgeois decline, the neo-Hellenism of Chirico, Braque and Picasso (and Stravinsky and Valéry for that matter), was certainly the slightest and feeblest of all, but it is none the less significant for that. It was quickly abandoned by all the serious artists who underwent its influence, except the fascist Chirico. With Chirico, the classical-mythological tradition has now declined to the level of the vulgar and hollow blood-and-earth myths which characterize fascist Italy no less than fascist Germany. (But it must not be supposed that Chirico is in any way indicative of "official" fascist painting. Feeble and frail though the work of this once talented artist has become, it is of considerably higher standard than the uninspired jazz-modern Nevinsonesque futurism which is the characteristic expression of Italian fascist painting today).

With Picasso, however, the revival took on certain peculiar characteristics. For one thing, he excluded the physically "beautiful," which had played so great a role—perhaps even a decisive one—in the previous revivals. In place of this, he substituted a heavy, massive corporeality, which he would contrast with the tenderest and most exaggeratedly gentle sentiments. His goofy great lesbian bathers, for example, are only saved from being Wagnerian by their stony, dead quality. Gradually, too, he began to modify his expression of the antique by using in the same picture, certain styles drawn from periods entirely different from the Hellenistic, so that some of his pictures have the eighteenth century appearance of a kind of monumental Greuze, for example.

Picasso's lack of dialectics, his inability to synthesise effectively the material and the ideal, the corporeal and the abstract, compelled him to try unsuccessful variations in each domain, to drive the corporeal towards the abstract (as he did in a series of terrifying pictures of gigantic skeleton shapes set sentimentally on shores or hilltops), and to drive the abstract towards the corporeal by the use of emotive color and sentimental association. But it was this same innocence of dialectic which causes Picasso's classicism to present a misunderstanding of what is the essential and fundamental point of Greek art, and therefore the *raison d'être* for its revival.

Bourgeois critics speak of Picasso's restlessness as if it were the outcome of some tireless esthetic-revolutionary impulse. Actually, it is nothing of the kind. Never before, in the history of art, has the artist been compelled so frequently to change his style. The leading painters of the day are obliged to undergo constant

government troops have taken of Spain's national art treasures."

#### THE ANSWER:

On April 19, "Le Peuple," a Belgian newspaper published in Brussels, printed the following article:

"At this moment violent newspaper campaigns are going on regarding an artistic scandal which has shaken the cultural world.

"It is a secret to no one in England that the El Greco masterpiece, 'The Burial of Count Orgaz,' is now in London to be offered at a public sale. The London 'Times' has asked the Spanish Ambassador for a statement. His answer leaves no room for doubt. The Ambassador said:

"The Spanish government does not sell any work of art. If the picture in question is in London, it has certainly not been sent there by the legal government. When the rebels took Toledo, the picture was in San Tome Church. We knew from an absolutely reliable source, from one who took part in the defense of Toledo and who vainly attempted to rescue the famous canvas, that the painting was still in the church.

"The truth is that Franco has appropriated this El Greco, a part of the country's cultural inheritance, in order to obtain ready and clinking coin."

"Persons of good will and of artistic sensibility have written to the Burgos Junta with the intention of clearing up the matter. But Burgos has failed to answer. In any case, public opinion is alert to this and it is unlikely that the public sale which is to take place eventually will be held without provoking protests.

"El Greco belongs to the Spanish people, like the land and like liberty, and no foreigner has the right to lay his hand on it."

#### NO MYSTERY

PARIS, April 26.—Some of the most important works of art of Madrid's famous Prado Museum will soon be exhibited in Paris, according to an announcement by Max Aub, art attache of the Spanish Embassy here. The works to be exhibited include paintings by Velasquez, El Greco and Goya.

"Mr. Aub says the paintings in the Prado Museum were carried to safety as early as last August. They were packed with the greatest care. The same procedure was followed with the works in other Madrid museums as well as those at Valencia and Escorial.

"The exhibition here will be a result of cooperation between French museum authorities and those of the Prado. It will not be sponsored by the Spanish Government, in order to avoid a political tinge to the display." (New York Times.)

There is then no mystery. The Spanish government has taken the best care of the masterpieces in the territory under its control.

But the Spanish fascists aided by Italian invasion and supported by the Catholic church seeks to strip the Spanish people of their freedom, their natural resources, and the material and saleable evidence of their cultural traditions.

Honest Catholic people in all countries will not have a bad conscience. They will reject the idea of robbing the Spanish people of their priceless art. They will in the same sense reject the stripping of the natural resources of the country for German and Italian armaments, and they will repudiate the support given by the Catholic church to the foreign invaders of Spain for the purpose of strangling the freedom of the Spanish people.



## Books

**ART AS A FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT.**  
Issued by the Supervisors Association of the Federal Art Project. Price fifteen cents. Copies may be obtained from the Artists Union. Include five cents for postage if you order by mail.

Madame Bovary's moral scruples were overcome by Leon's simple observation that it was done in Paris. The opponents of a permanent art project, while lacking in Emma's naivete, are just as easily impressed by the prevailing fashions of London and Paris. When they discover in addition that it's done in most of the European countries and even in darkest Mexico, their fear of the finger of scorn should impel them to withdraw their opposition.

This neatly gotten up pamphlet on the roles of various governments in the arts and crafts of some eleven nations, offers solid groundwork for comparisons of official attitudes. In reference to the United States, John Taylor Arms observes in his introduction: "For too long in our country has art been considered as a luxury for the moneyed few, and for too long has the artist been looked upon as a being apart, conforming to conditions differing from those by which men regulate their lives and lacking the right to that support which society accords to workers in other fields."

There is a short historical introduction, following which is a generalized account of the history and structure of government relation to art and art education in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico and the Soviet Union. This is continued by a more extended account of the U.S.A. leading to current institutions, followed by an appendix of foreign government expenditures for art and education.

Comparisons of the figures are exceptionally revealing. Nazi Germany spends less for education than any of the listed governments, which include several fourth-rate powers. Soviet Russia spends nineteen times over what the most ample educational budget in Europe, that of Great Britain, allocates for itself and its dominions. Italy spends less for art in 1936 than Germany in the preceding year.

In the pages given over to analysis of the individual countries, however, the technique of straight reporting is attempted but not adhered to. The most glaring example of this is the fulsome praise accorded the Italian Fascist Government, which cold figures give the lie to. For instance, "The state budget makes generous provisions for art schools, museums, etc." The chart shows, on the other hand, that Italy spent the measly sum of \$314,057 for art schools in 1936, less than any first-class power in Europe. The fantastically small sum of \$3,668 was spent in the same year for prizes, expositions and acquisitions. The bulk of the Fascist art budget is obviously allocated to the resurrection of Imperial Rome through restorations, Neo-Roman monuments and propaganda paintings. This is naively admitted



bouleversements of manner as one formula after another fails to solve the problem of producing a vital art relevant to the times. The excessive multiplicity, the confused abundance of simultaneous or successive aspects of a most varied kind, such as one finds in Picasso, are the expression of an artist whose personality is the symbol of the dominant class in a time when the opposition of violent social contrasts are the rule. And when one considers how short was the period in the course of which Picasso reached his fake synthesis of the Greek tendency and the abstract, and how great, on the other hand, was the interval between the culminating point of cubism and that of the next period, one is forced to realize that the gravity of the ideological crises which menace the bourgeois artist, however gifted he may be, are not less severe than those material economic crises which threaten the bourgeois world in general.

The works of even so great a painter as Picasso become merely a repertoire of the history of art. Artists who were taken for revolutionaries at the beginning of the century are, after thirty-five years' work, so far from resolving the problem left by the history of the nineteenth century of creating an art based, not on an abstract logic, but on dialectical materialism, that in most cases they have fallen to the other extreme, to the feudal limits of the bourgeoisie, by virtue of the smart modern forms of reaction.

Absolute individualism and the caricatural basis of contemporary style have both led inevitably to a metaphysical world which takes either the form called "abstract" or the form called "surrealist," an explicit intensification of that interior division which has characterized particularly the art of our time (and the division between the abstractionists and the surrealists is something much more than an extension of the difference between the fauves and the cubists in the first decade of the century), an interior division which is to be found in all domains of bourgeois life.

It is true that there are a few artists who strive to retain their equilibrium, and to synthesise these two elements of contemporary art into their works, but the elements remain metaphysical.

The contemporary position, then, is rather like this: On the one hand flourishes an abstract idealism concretizing in form and color, not the surface of objects represented, not even the symbol of states of mind, but, in so far as is possible, just the expression of the function of shape and color. The works of Kandinsky, Mondrian, Héliou and Ernst are most representative of this genre.

On the other hand there are the surrealists, whose tendency is towards an



idealized realism, often using (as Ernst does in his collages, and Dali in his paintings) a deliberately reactionary technique with a view to deliberately developing a three-dimensional corporeality or irrational dream states and phantasies.

Both these descriptions are of necessity perfunctory, and it may even be that they are somewhat unfair, representing as they do, rather the views of the "official" and extreme abstractionists and surrealists. But the point to be observed is this, that the problem transmitted to us from the nineteenth century by Courbet the materialist and Cézanne the dialectician, is still to this day entirely unresolved. Indeed, both materialism and dialectics are excluded from modern bourgeois art.

It would be absolutely false to imagine that this extraordinary interior scission was some purely personal or esthetic manifestation. This phenomenon, on the contrary, is characteristic of the whole bourgeois situation, in its departure from the free thought and materialism in which it was born, and its return to a quasi-mediaeval, metaphysical ideology which it had combated in the beginning. (Indicative of contemporary "rationalistic" metaphysics is the extraordinary superstition with which the psychoanalyst is regarded. And it's not merely by chance that one of the greatest differences between abstraction and surrealism lies in the fact that, if surrealism is pathological in the extent to which it relies on sex as a "subject," abstraction is just as pathological in its frantic avoidance of the sexually emotive.) The abstract character of bourgeois life shows itself successively by the replacement, in material production, of the human body by the machine, of which man becomes merely stereotyped the regulator and attendant; then by the supremacy of non-productive commerce which transforms its own means of exchange into more and more abstract figurations, from gold to paper-money, paper-money to promissory notes, etc.; and then finally in the relations between society and ideology, with art, for example, which in the Middle Ages was one of the common benefits of Christianity, and which now become the object of an absurd, speculative commerce.

When the feeble dominant class of feudalism was liquidated by the "democratically tending" bourgeoisie, a bourgeois elite, completely ignorant where culture was concerned, was substituted for the patron who was either genuinely cultured, or whose social position obliged him to appear relatively generous to his artists. The bourgeoisie came to consider the criticism of art as one of the natural rights of man. This attitude was adopted by the mass of semi-cultured petty-bourgeoisie, and sentimental, pseudometaphysical theories of art arose, just as the Christian Church was losing its creative power (i.e., as a mythology functioning between material and spiritual production). Official art was made a refuge of spiritual reaction and has persisted as such (consider the extraordinary falling graph from Rubens, through David, to Frank Salisbury). So all artists who turned towards an expression of the spirit of the concrete life of their times found themselves labelled as "revolutionaries" even when they were most vividly representing the dominant class of their epoch.

And now, when all the most gifted artists are obliged carefully to void their work of all communally recognizable content, either under pressure of an epoch of contradictory tendencies, or to demonstrate to their buyers the power of their individuality (often the only appreciable virtue of a contemporary work of art), the expression of the understanding of their own times is so beyond bourgeois capacities that even their highest artistic productions, formally sensitive and technically brilliant though they may be, fall short of the ideological exigencies of the time in so far as they are historically reactionary.

The existence of a proletariat conscious of its class and fighting for it—however little this may have entered the consciousness of the artist—is indicative of the rising of a new special order which will require a new order of art adopted to its needs. And just as this new social order will take over and benefit by the machinery of production which has been so magnificently developed under capitalism, so it is urgent that the new artist should be careful to comprehend and take over all that is valid for him and his class from the powerful, sensitive, and excellent productions of the great modern artists such as Gris, Picasso, Héliou and Henry Moore. To ignore the works of such artists, to make no use of their discoveries, is very seriously to retard the effective growth of the art of the rising social order.

in the bland statement: "The creative artist of today feels very strongly the paternal hand of the government."

The section on Germany, while emphasizing the rigid surveillance of art by the Ministry of Propaganda, also falls short of the truth by omitting the persecution of artists of modern persuasion. If the Supervisors Association wished to avoid conscious editorializing, it was still possible to specify the facts in an objective manner. Avoidance of the issue leads only to a misleading conception of Nazi "concern" for culture.

The statistical value of WPA Federal Art Project figures are seriously impaired by the omission of all expenditures. No government allocations are recorded and no salaries. Because of this no comparisons can be made with foreign countries.

This pamphlet is indispensable to anyone who is interested in furthering the art projects, despite the booklet's lack of inclusiveness. It is the only publication with tables for art expenditures by foreign nations, with their cultural set-ups and backgrounds. The historical development of American art institutions, as well as the present structure of the Art Project is necessary information to every artist and layman.

—J. K.

## American Artists School

The American Artists School opens its new term, with an augmented personnel and many new ideas for a progressive art education. The school, located at 131 West 14th Street, began its fall schedule of classes on September 20. The enlarged curriculum includes day, evening, and week-end classes in drawing and painting from life, composition, water color, portrait painting, mural painting, social satire and illustration, etching and aquatint, sculpture, wood and stone carving and the graphic arts. The special Saturday classes for children in drawing, painting and clay modeling will be continued.

The faculty includes such distinguished artists as: Alexander Alland, Emilio Amero, Francis Criss, Robert M. Cronbach, Hilda Deutsch, Tully Filmus, Ruth Gikow, Harry Glassgold, Chaim Gross, John Groth, Charles Hanke, Moses Soyer, Carl R. Holty, Julian E. Levi, Hugh Miller, Eugene Morley, Anton Refregier, Miron Sokole, Nahum Tschacbasov, Lynd Ward and Sol Wilson.

An innovation in the curriculum of the school will be weekly lectures by recognized authorities planned to give the student a broad picture of the artist in modern society, his position and importance, and the role he can play. These lectures will provide the student with an historical approach to his creative problems, and will introduce those great developments in the exact, natural, and social sciences which have so profoundly influenced the course of development of modern art. The student will gain an understanding of modern society itself, its forces, tendencies, and conflicts which can only serve to deepen his aesthetic outlook and capacities.

## Correspondence

To the Editors:  
Sir:

In reply to the strictures of Mr. Porter in a recent review article on my "Negro Art: Past and Present," imputing "narrow racialism" and my



support of the "defeatist philosophy of the Segregationist," may I simply have the privilege of quoting a paragraph from the book which it is astonishing that he could have overlooked:

"A few years back, there were promising Negro artists, but little or no Negro art. Most Negro artists at that time regarded racialism in art as an unwarranted restriction. They either avoided racial subjects or treated them in what have been aptly called "Nordic transcriptions." As a result, in contrast to the vital Negro self-expression in poetry, fiction, drama and music, there was nothing comparable in the field of the fine arts." . . .

"Why was this? Mainly, I think, because social prejudice had seized on the stigma of color and racial feature, and the Negro artist became the oversensitive victim of this negative color-consciousness and its inhibitions. Sad as was the plight of Negro art in his hands, as long as the Negro artist was in this general frame of mind, his whole expression, even in non-racial subjects, was weak and to some extent apologetic in conception and spirit, because it was bound to be derivative, imitative and falsely sophisticated. But as the Negro subject has become more popular generally, a healthier atmosphere has been generated. Further developments in Negro cultural life have led the Negro artist toward a very real and vital racialism. But such an adoption of the course of Negro art does not, it must always be remembered, commit us to an artistic ghetto or a restricted art province. It only signalizes a double emancipation from apologetic timidity and academic imitation. It binds the Negro artist only to express himself in originality and unhampered sincerity, and opens for him a relatively undeveloped field in which he has certain naturally intimate contacts and interests. Every successive step in the general popularity of the Negro theme brings the Negro and white American artist closer together, therefore, in this common interest of the promotion of Negro art over the common denominator of the development of native American art." (pp. 119-120.)

ALAIN LOCKE.

To the Editors:

We, the undersigned abstract artists, received with enthusiasm the news that the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, to be devoted mainly to the enlightenment of the public in abstract art, has been established. We believe that the establishment of a foundation to provide for the "promotion and encouragement of art and education in art," and specifically abstract art, holds promise of far-reaching cultural progress and improvement of public esthetic taste.

There are certain statements, however, made by Baroness Hilla Rebay, who will serve as curator of Mr. Guggenheim's collection, which we feel tend to confuse rather than clarify the issue of abstract art in the minds of many.

We wish it understood that with the works of art themselves and with the artists who created the works in Mr. Guggenheim's collection, we will not disagree. But we cannot accept with approbation the opinions which Baroness Rebay seems to have that abstract art has "no meaning and represents nothing," "that it is the "prophet of spiritual life," something "unearthly"; that abstractions are "worlds of their own" achieved

# For an Artists Union Workshop

By Harold Lehman

Last January 9 the Artists Union demonstrated its ability in a field of collective activity into which it had hitherto not ventured. Members of the Union designed and executed striking floats, banners, and posters that contributed materially to the outstanding success of the parade against W.P.A. curtailment organized on that day by the Workers' Alliance and the City Projects Council. The enthusiasm with which dozens of artists, possessing little or no experience in this direction, met a large task in a very short time indicated that there was considerable interest among Artists Union members for more direct participation as artists and craftsmen in the daily struggles of the people. And the success of the venture conclusively demonstrated that the members of the Artists Union could work together on the creative as well as on the economic front.

Since that time the idea of a permanent Artists Union workshop has taken continually deeper root. It was apparent that what was done so effectively with a minimum of organization and time and equipment could on future occasions be far more successful if executed on the basis of a well-prepared plan.

A properly organized workshop would have wide potentialities. It would:

1. Rally all artists who wish to work together for a social or cultural purpose.
2. Encourage the artist to seek new forms, new tools, new materials to express himself better in a modern way.
3. Prepare the artist to express far more effectively the needs and aspirations of the people.
4. Make of the artist a powerful ally of the people in their day-to-day struggles, bringing the art worker closer to workers in other fields, who in their turn would be more disposed to aid him in his own economic struggles.
5. Make possible the production of work for sudden emergencies such as demonstrations, mass meetings, strikes, etc.
6. Make the important creative activity of a workshop a self-supporting venture through producing work for labor and other mass organizations at a reasonable fee.

A concrete illustration that these potentialities can be realized is to be found in the experience of the Sequeiros Experimental Workshop, which has already functioned in New York for more than a year. The Workshop was formed in April, 1936. It grew originally out of the desire of a few artists to work together and to paint in fresco. Some of the members had had previous experience working in a group; three had worked with Sequeiros in Los Angeles in 1932. Due largely to Sequeiros' vision and enthusiasm, the first relatively simple intentions of the group expanded into a far more comprehensive program.

Two main points were embodied in the Workshop plan: the Workshop should (1) be a laboratory for experiment in modern art techniques; (2) create art for the people. Under the first heading came experiment with regard to tools, materials, aesthetic or artistic approach, and methods of working collectively; under the second point came a utilization of media extending from the simple direct statement of the poster, whose service is fleeting, to the complex statement of the relatively permanent mural.

The organization of the workshop became more stable as activities expanded. Originally the shop functioned by placing a fixed monthly assessment upon the members. It was obvious that such a method could not be continued indefinitely: the shop had to become self-supporting. The logical way to achieve this status was to gain sustained support from mass organizations in return for services rendered. A rate of pay for work produced was arranged to cover both the cost of materials and tools and the operation of the shop. If there was any surplus this went into the pur-



chase of more materials or new tools and equipment. There was never a question of individual profit for the members; in fact it was not infrequent that an under-estimation of the cost of a job made necessary additional contributions on the part of the members. Since most of the shop-members were employed on WPA the everyday tasks of running the shop and keeping things in order fell to the unemployed members. In return they were free to use the shop facilities for their own work. When large projects were undertaken, these members were paid for their labor.

The first important undertaking of the Workshop was the construction of a large May Day float in 1936. This project crystallized practically all the outstanding ideas about which the shop had been organized. It was in the first place Art for the People, executed collectively; and into it went dynamic idea, new painting media, mechanical construction and mechanical movement, polychrome sculpture, and the use of new tools. Certainly a message in such striking form had never been brought forward in a May Day parade before.

In rapid succession thereafter came a float on a boat for the American League Against War and Fascism (Anti-Hearst Day, July 4, 1936), and two Anti-War floats for the League in August, 1936. The distinguishing feature of these was that they employed actual mechanical movement and novel presentation of idea. People stopped, looked, and took in the message.

Succeeding efforts were a fifteen-foot cut-out figure for the rally for Loyalist Spain at Madison Square Garden in January, 1937 and a large Mecca Temple curtain decoration for the memorial meeting for victims of German Fascism at which Thomas Mann was the principal speaker. The most recent collective project of the Workshop was a gigantic float for May Day, 1937.

At the same time that this art for the people was being produced on the basis of the experience then possessed by the group, the members were busy realizing the other main objective of the workshop, that is, to enlarge their experience by technical experiment. Experiments were made in the use of nitro-cellulose and silicate in painting, stencil and airgun in lithography, the utilization of the projector and of photography not as ends but as means. Penetrating these technical investigations was the use of new approaches in composition: kinetics, superimposition, novel juxtapositions, all exploited for one purpose, vivid psychological impact.

In the course of its growth the Siqueiros Workshop realized in some measure almost every aspect of its original detailed program. It did:

1. Carry on experiments continually and successfully with new media, materials, tools, construction, and methods, out of which came the sound beginning of modern technique for direct public art;
2. Develop many forms for public art that are aesthetically sound and ideologically valuable, bringing the moving power of art to aid in the realization of the people's values, thus drawing closer together the artist and the worker in other fields;
3. Learn more about the psychology of plastic elements, the relation of techniques to their time, the value of absolutely modern means to the expression of modern ideas.

For lack of equipment the workshop was unable to explore sufficiently the field of multi-reproductive art; for lack of opportunity it had to forego group experiment in the most permanent field of public art, the mural.

Above all the experience of the Siqueiros Workshop proves:

1. That artists can plan together, work together, and achieve together for the mutual benefit of themselves and the people;
2. That this can be done on a working basis rising out of this very relationship of mutual benefit: the people, through their labor and mass organizations, are willing to defray the costs in exchange for the very real value they obtain.

Quite plainly, there is every reason why the project of an experimental workshop must now be approached from the broadest possible standpoint. On the one hand the public in trade unions and mass organizations of all kinds has almost unlimited need for creative work that will directly express their aims and hopes. For the artists, on the other hand, this opens a wide prospect. There is the tremendous

as their creators "turned away from contemplation of earth." The meaning implied in these phrases is that abstract artists preclude from their works, and lives too (for after all, an artist must live some super-worldly existence in order to create super-worldly works of art), worldly realities, and devote themselves to making spiritual squares, and "triangles, perhaps, less spiritual," which will exalt certain few souls who have managed, or can afford, to put aside "materialism."

We abstract artists are, of course, first to recognize that any good work of art has its own justification, that it has the effect of bringing joyful ecstasy to a sensitive spectator, that there is such a thing as an esthetic emotion, which is a particular emotion, caused by a particular created harmony of lines, colors and forms. But the forms may not be so ghostly-pure-spirit-suspended as Baroness Rebay would wish. Who knows whether the divorce of cosmic atmosphere and earthly air is so absolute? Who can tell us into what reaches the intuitive soul of an artist? Must extend? Perhaps there are some spectators who behold and enjoy a square, more or less, of fine color, and go away refreshed, but not frozen into the state of sublime non-intellectuality that Baroness Rebay described.

It is our very definite belief that abstract art forms are not separated from life, but on the contrary are great realities, manifestations of a search into the world about one's self, having basis in living actuality, made by artists who walk the earth, who see colors (which are realities), squares (which are realities, not some spiritual mystery), tactile surfaces, resistant materials, movement. The abstract work of an artist who is not conscious of or is contemptuous of the world about him is different from the abstract work of an artist who identifies himself with life and seeks generative force from its realities.

Einstein is as "pure" a scientist as can be found. His work is applicable perhaps to no immediate practical end. He deals with cosmic space and ideas. In fact, he is an "abstractionist." Yet his theories are realities, they are based upon certain life-forms, and they help us to understand the world we live in. They are themselves a new form, which we can enjoy, just as abstract art. His theories are not valuable to us as an aid in escaping into purity trances: they renew and extend our contact with life, just as the work of a realist-abstractionist, which is based upon manifestations of life and is itself a manifestation of life, can be seen, enjoyed and used by the greatest number of people.

Abstract art does not end in a private chapel. Its positive identification with life has brought a profound change in our environment and in our lives. The modern esthetic has accompanied modern science in a quest for knowledge and recognition of materials, in a search for a logical combination of art and life. In no other age has art functioned so ubiquitously as in our own. One has only to observe the life about him to see that abstract art has been enormously fecund, and remains a vitally organic reality of this age.

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opportunity for new jobs in addition to the kinds of work described above: trade union murals, World's Fair, subway art and other possible governmental projects. As the experience of the Siqueiros Workshop has shown, the artist would be encouraged to try new tools, new materials, new forms. It would help him to find more effective means to express the values of the people, thereby at once furthering his development as artist and bringing him a powerful ally in his own economic and political struggles.

It is only logical that the Artists Union should take advantage of the vast opportunity that now exists for further development of this field of creative activity. By virtue of its prestige, its resources, the almost untapped talents of its large membership, and the interest the artists have already shown in a workshop project, the Artists Union is precisely that organization which is in a position to build upon the remarkable pioneering groundwork of the Siqueiros Experimental Workshop.

*It is intended that a discussion on the subject of a workshop be arranged in the New York Artists Union in the near future. Comment from readers outside New York will be welcomed.*

**Exhibitions**

**CHINESE AND JAPANESE ARTISTS**

While the minions of Mitsui and Mitsubishi are pouring death on China from the sea and air and the torn bodies of women and children writhe in the shattered cities, American reactionaries are conducting their own offensive against American Orientals. With the impartiality characteristic of American diplomacy, which goes in for "neutrality" measures like the current embargo against both imperialist Japan and bleeding China, the W.P.A. Administration has ruled all aliens off the projects. This includes, of course, all those who are prohibited by law from becoming citizens. Since only white aliens and those of African descent are eligible for citizenship, Asiatics find themselves on the proscribed list.

Japanese and Chinese artists have just concluded an exhibition at the A.C.A. Gallery, welding in common persecution their collective desire to function as artists and Americans. Sponsored by the Artists Union, the Artists' Congress and the Citizens' Committee for Support of W.P.A., the exhibition indicated the contributions of the Chinese and Japanese to American culture.

Yasuo Kuniyoshi, for instance, who is represented in many American museums as an American artist, and who was invited to the Carnegie International as an American, is a major influence in our art life. Not on W.P.A., Kuniyoshi sent one of his finest canvasses and several lithographs to the show as a gesture of solidarity with his brother artists and Orientals.

With W.P.A. support withdrawn and the

chances of private patronage as remote as ever, these Japanese-American and Chinese-American artists are in serious danger of being eliminated from the art field, to say nothing of life itself. And, despite their great contribution to American culture, they will become the victims of reaction unless the liberal and progressive forces get busy and build a strong defense.

In the exhibition are the vibrant landscapes of Chuzo Tamotzu, with "Jersey Station" and "Fire-trap" outstanding in their quiet harmonies of green and brown; the anti-imperialist canvases of Eitaro Ishigaki, with two Spanish subjects of Basque women hurling Italian fascist "volunteers" into the sea; the sensitive water-colors and gouaches of Thomas Nagai; the socially symbolic montages of Sakari Suzuki; Don Gook Wu's colorful impressionism and work by C. Yamasaki, Yosei Amemiya, Roy Kadowaki, Kaname Miyamoto, Fuji Nakamizo, Kiyoshi Shimizu, George Tera, Moo-Wee Tiam, Bunji Tagawa, Chu H. Jor and C. W. Young.

**AMERICAN ARTISTS SCHOOL FACULTY**

The American Artists School has burgeoned into the new season with an exhibition, recently concluded, of members of its forthcoming faculty. The wide range of art education offered is reflected in the work of the instructors and the variety of media taught.

The school's graphic department has been greatly buttressed by the acquisition of Hugh Miller in etching and aquatint, Lynd Ward in woodblock, and John Groth in illustration and social satire. Together with Eugene Morley in Lithography they make one of the best black and white teaching set-ups in the city.

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Hugh Miller's contributions in etching and aquatint, "Subway" and "Gossip" respectively, revealed this artist's gift for large handling and condensed expression. Morley showed some lithographs of socially pertinent themes, handled with imagination, and Lynd Ward was represented by several exquisitely cut woodblocks in his usual manner.

John Groth exhibited some of his savage drawings and two of his first oils. Inspired by the struggle of the Spanish people against the fascists, Groth revealed an ability to simplify his shapes into expressive units in his "Moors and Women" and his diabolical picture of men pulling the boots off a dead soldier.

Miron Sokole was represented by some of his haunting scenes of deserted villages, painted with air freshness; Nahum Tschachbasov's "Flowers" was in the Expressionist vein, fortified by social content and rich pigmentation; Sol Wilson maintained the high level created by the painting instructors with several superb marine subjects.

The rest of the faculty exhibitors were represented by creditable work, including Moses Soyer, Carl Holty, Julian Levi, Harry Glassgold, Anton Refregier, Robert M. Cronbach, Chaim G. O'S, Ruth Gikow, Hilda Deutsch and A. Alland.

—J. K.

## CALENDAR

A.C.A.—52 West 8 St. Paintings by Mei Solatoff, stage designer of the Artef. Sept. 27-Oct. 9. Drawings and lithographs by Jack Markow. Oct. 10-23. Paintings by Joe Jones. Oct. 24-Nov. 13.

Artists Gallery—33 West 8 St. John Oppen, Hans Boehler. Oct. 2-17.

Boyer Galleries—69 East 57 St. Paintings of Americana by John McCrady. Oct. 11-30.

Buchholz Gallery—3 West 46 St. Ernst L. Kirchner, German Expressionist. Through Oct.

Contemporary Arts—New Galleries at 38 West 57 St. First one-man show of paintings by Bernard J. Steffen. Large group show of sponsored artists and invited artists. Until Oct. 23.

Delphic Studios—44 W. 56 St. Salon of Spanish-American art. Small wood sculptures. Paintings of Mexico by Howard B. Spenser.

F.A.R. Gallery—21 East 61 St. Facsimile reproductions—Masters of Modern Art. Through Oct.

Kleemann Galleries—38 East 57 St. Finest selection of Louis M. Eilshemius to date. During Oct.

Midtown Galleries—605 Madison Ave. Paintings by Vincent Spagna. Oct. 4-18. Paintings by Minna Citron. Oct. 19-Nov. 4.

Rehn Gallery—683 Fifth Ave. Aaron Bohrod. Oct. 4-16.

Uptown Gallery—249 West End Ave. Group Show. Oct. 11-Nov. 5.

Walker Galleries—108 East 57 St. Paintings by Wendell Jones. Until Oct. 9. Famous Masters. Degas, Delacroix, Homer, Ryder and many others. Through Oct.

Westermann Gallery—24 West 48 St. Paintings by Gunvor Bull-Teilman. Oct. 1-19.

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